

Members of the Public Health Committee:

I write to you in support of H.B.6200- An Act Concerning the Long-term use of Antibiotic Treatment of Lyme Disease. I have a long personal history of Lyme Disease. I was first diagnosed with Lyme Disease in the 70's by physicians at Yale. This was before antibiotics were used to treat Lyme Disease. I was followed by the Yale Team for approximately 10 years. Eventually, in my 40's, I was given a course of Doxycycline as measure to potentially impact my fertility status. I was unable to conceive naturally and also unable to conceive with assisted reproductive technology. I have unexplained infertility and no one can be sure that Lyme Disease and a lack of early treatment with antibiotic did not contribute to this diagnosis. Since December 2006, I have had Lyme Disease 3 times as confirmed by my Lyme titer and the Western Blot blood tests. I was just tested again this January 2009, and my Lyme test is once again positive for active disease. My infectious disease MD and primary care MD do not believe in chronic Lyme Disease and do not wish to treat me at this time. I am fearful that my Lyme symptoms will return with a vengeance but I have agreed to wait to be retested in 2 months. I am a retired physical therapist and am aware of the dangers and pitfalls of overuse of antibiotics, however, I am not sure that I have ever received enough antibiotic in a sufficient duration to eradicate my Lyme Disease. I feel better while I am on antibiotics and for two or so months after antibiotics but then my symptoms of sweating, profound fatigue and lethargy, sleep disturbances, memory problems, joint pain, and poor exercise tolerance return. Without the option of longer term antibiotic treatment either with or in conjunction with other therapies, I fear that I will struggle with Lyme Disease the rest of my life. I am in my early fifties and believe that a chronic condition will increasingly complicate and compromise my overall health status as I continue to age.

My mother (currently 85 years old) had Lyme Disease in the 80's which resulted in Bell's facial palsy. From June 2006 through October 2007, she developed atypical (neuropsychiatric) Lyme Disease. My mother was hospitalized 8 times, and I was told she suffered from dementia. Only as a result of my tireless insistence was she tested and treated for Lyme Disease. From August 2006 through February 2007, my mother became catatonic, non-ambulatory and incontinent of bowel and bladder. She lost over 60 pounds, and I eventually won another battle to have a feeding tube put in her in order for her to survive. During the period of June 2006 through October 2007, I kept asking for my mother to keep being treated for Lyme. She was treated with antibiotics by mouth, IV and also injection. If she hadn't had several courses of antibiotic treatment and aggressive medical and psychiatric care, she would still be in a diaper in a nursing home today. My mother has nearly completely recovered and now lives with a caregiver in her own home. I feel that my mother was fortunate and "lucky" to have received treatment as it was a battle every step of the way to have the medical community consider ongoing Lyme testing and treatment. Physicians should be allowed to consider long-term antibiotic treatment as a

sanctioned viable treatment option for symptomatic patients. Lyme Disease appears to be epidemic in Connecticut and the public needs help from the medical community in our own state to treat active and persistent Lyme Disease symptomatology.

Sincerely,
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